

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of an Office Action dated March 15, 2010. In this response Applicants have amended claim 21. Following entry of these amendments, claims 21-40 are pending in the application. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments to claim 21 (i.e., the only independent claim) and the remarks which follow.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action sets forth the following rejections: (a) claims 21-37 and 40 as being unpatentable over U.S. 2003/0072699 to Tonkovich; and, (b) claims 38 and 39 as being unpatentable over Tonkovich and U.S. 2005/0172556 to Powell. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the following reasons.

The primary reference Tonkovich does not show the features now recited in claim 21: (a) "said at least one reforming catalyst passage being disposed between the supply passages parallel to the supply passages; wherein said at least one reforming catalyst passage and the supply passages are installed substantially in the same plane in the reforming element", and (b) "plural supply holes arranged in a line in the direction of combustion gas flow". The above features that are present in claim 21 as amended herein provides a compact structure in comparison to Tonkovich's invention.

In contrast, Tonkovich's invention fails to provide a compact structure. According to Tonkovich's invention, as shown in FIG. 19e, a supply passage 133 is disposed parallel to a combustion gas passage 122 substantially in the same plane as the combustion gas passage 122 (not reforming catalyst passage). Further, the supply passage 133 is not installed in the reforming element.

Also, the presently-claimed structure in claim 21 assists in a more even temperature distribution. According to FIGs. 19b-e of Tonkovich's publication, hydrogen gas is supplied only from one inlet of the combustion gas passage 122 (left side). Also, FIGs. 19b-e show an uneven temperature distribution occurs because the inlet of the combustion gas passage 122 is at the highest temperature, and the temperature gradually falls towards the outlet of the combustion gas passage 122. Therefore, unlike the present

invention, Tonkovich's invention cannot solve the problem of uneven temperature distribution. On the other hand, according to the now-amended claim 1, plural supply holes are arranged in a line in the direction of combustion gas flow and achieve an even temperature distribution.

In conclusion, amended Claim 21 is distinguishable from Tonkovich.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. An early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions regarding the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by the credit card payment instructions in EFS-Web being incorrect or absent, resulting in a rejected or incorrect credit card transaction, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

JUN 14 2010

Date _____
FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (202) 672-5490
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By Michael D. Kaminski
Michael D. Kaminski
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 32,904